



## Everyday Leadership

*What do we have in common with celebrity leaders and leadership gurus?*

My business book club readers frequently ponder this question as we work to translate the writings of leadership authors into philosophies, behaviors, and skills for the workplace. Sometimes it seems we have little in common except for learning from and being inspired by them as we seek to be better leaders.

In truth, it is everyday leaders, women and men like you and me, who truly make the difference. Each day millions of people enter businesses, organizations, schools, churches, and homes pressured to make a difference. These everyday leaders are tenacious and persistent in pursuit of advancing missions, strategies, and goals of their organizations. These everyday leaders make decisions leading to improvements and innovation. These everyday leaders set a moral compass that inspires ethical behavior. Everyday leaders are people who change the world.

For individuals committed to the development of leaders, I suggest meeting them where they live. Leaders are frustrated by having the newest leadership concept shoved at them with an expectation they will be automatically changed. This “flavor of the week” approach to leadership development is mostly an academic experience. If we really want to develop leaders, we have to create spaces and places so they can tell the truth about leadership in real time. Real time leadership is similar but not exactly like what you read in a book. Books provide context for leadership development but fall short because authors aren’t in the workplace to support translating written principles into effective leadership action.

What everyday leaders want most is to be supported as they work at their profession. Leadership is not an exact science. Effective leadership requires a willingness to step into a dynamic and great experiment. Leaders who have consistent values, beliefs, and actions create a rock solid base from which great leadership grows.

Everyday leaders want to network with each other. They know the isolation of leading and need to hear best practices from colleagues. Everyday leaders need an opportunity to process challenges and mistakes without being viewed as weak or incompetent. Everyday leaders want to discuss work-life balance as an issue affecting both women and men, and find solutions to be successful at work and home. Everyday leaders think about their legacies; how to ensure today serves the success of those who follow them in the future.

I thank the leadership gurus for sharing their study of leadership. Their knowledge encourages me to look at leadership as a profession. In the end, it is everyday leaders trying to be their best as they grow in the profession of leadership. Let’s celebrate their contributions and provide consistent ongoing support for their good works. Everything really does rise and fall on leadership and we must support, respect, and honor those who choose to lead for all they do each day. Onward and Upward leaders!

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